

BREAKING GROUND

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE TENNESSEE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES



(Left) **Becky Barker** and (Right) **Crystal Woods** *COAT OF ARMS BANNERS*. Becky has Severe (Chronic) Depression and enjoys expressing her feelings through Art Media. The Cookeville Tennessee Art Society helped her develop her talents and she enjoys helping her friends to express their artistic abilities. Crystal, of Chattanooga, attends the AIM Center as a consumer with mental illness. Recently discovering her love and appreciation for art, she takes advantage of all classes she can attend.

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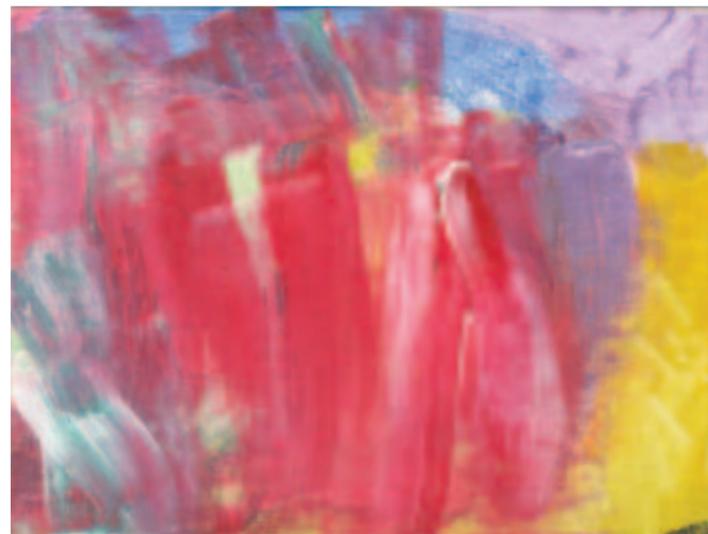
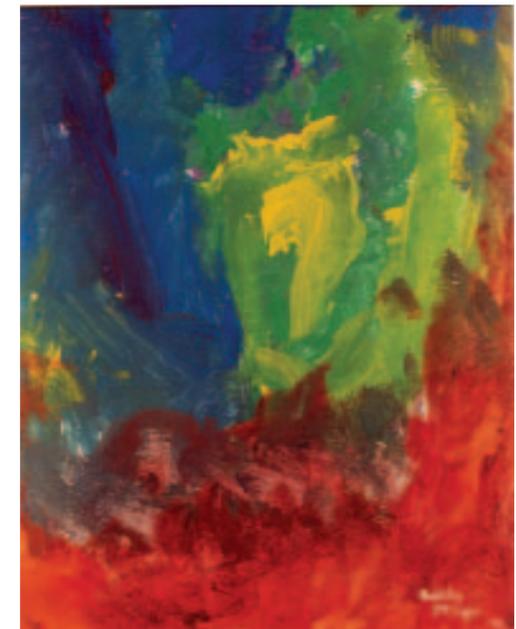
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ARTS ISSUE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE VANDERBILT KENNEDY CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

INSIDE:

POETRY AND PROSE
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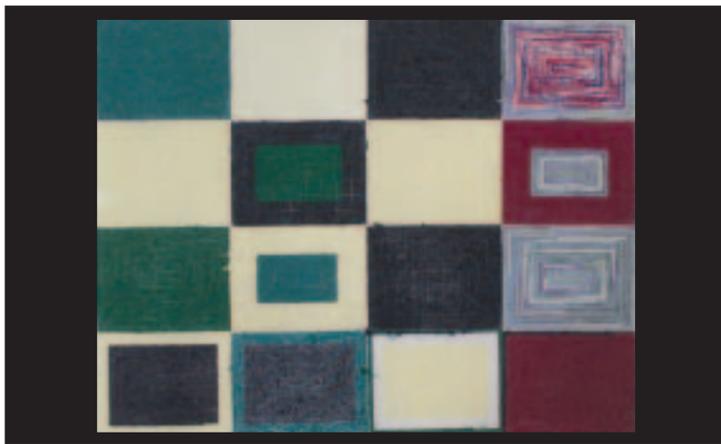


Front Cover: **Anne Ambrose** has been painting most of her life. Her childhood was split between Nashville and the bayous of Louisiana and she was influenced by both cultures. Her style is a combination of expressionist and fantasy-based themes. In addition to being an artist, she is a health care advocate and performer, and for several years has been performing across the country with messages of hope for better health care.

This Page: (Top left) **Betty Parman** of Greenfield, *TWO HEARTS*. She enjoys painting in her Life Enrichment sessions at Community Development Services in Martin. She works in many different mediums including water color, basic color marker, latch and hook and computer. (Top right) **Kenneth Wall** of Paris, *BUFFALO*. Kenneth enjoys painting in the Life Enrichment sessions at Community Development Services. Kenneth also works at CDS's Workshop in Martin and lives in the Parker group home at CDS. (Second row, left) **Jackie Schaffer** of Knoxville draws this particular face often and likes to give his drawings as gifts to people that he cares about. He is 65 years old, married and diagnosed with mental retardation and schizophrenia. (Second row, center) **Danny Vandergriff**, of Chattanooga made this painting into Christmas cards for family and friends. At age 16, he developed pseudo bulbar palsy. Life is a challenge, but he refuses to let anything stop him. (Second row, right) **W. Robert Miller** of Greenville, *THE CREATION*. Robert loves to paint his "Art Buddies" from Tusculum College. Robert has exhibited his artwork in various local and state exhibitions, competitions and galleries. He attends Creative

(Top) **Martha Culp** of Johnson City, *PEACE BE STILL*. This was Martha's first painting in 30 years after she was diagnosed as legally blind. (Bottom left) **Tiffanie McClendon** is a 34-year-old with Cerebral Palsy. She attends the Rochelle Center and likes to paint on T-shirts, canvas and clay pots. (Bottom right) **Sarah Bradley** of Creative Expressions of Art, Greenville, *REFLECTIONS*, Acrylic.

Expressions of Art. (Bottom left) **Henry E. Davis** of Greenville, *NOSING AROUND*. Henry loves to paint collaborative wall murals and has earned recognition in multiple art competitions/exhibitions and TV coverage. He attends Creative Expressions of Art.



(Top left) **Charlie Chapman** *MY HEART*. Charlie is an accomplished artist and photographer. His work has been shown in four exhibitions and one of his photographs won the 2001 Weakley County Arts and Humanities Award in photography. He lives in the Willow Group Home and attends Community Developmental Services. (Top center) **Mike Hernon** *SELF PORTRAIT*. Mike enjoys painting daily in the Life Enrichment Program at Community Developmental Services. (Top right) **Dennis O. Gallahar, Jr.**, of Greeneville *ARISTOTLE'S SIGN*. Creative Expressions of Art. **Therapeutic Arts Program at the Dawn of Hope:** (Center row) *WATCH THEM GROW CATERPILLARS* by **Brian Bradley, Melanie Garland, Betty Smithpeters, Teresa Johnson, Howard Biggs, and Helen Jackson**. The materials that were used were silk pantyhose, soil, grass seed, pom poms, plastic eyes and pipe cleaners. The individuals truly enjoyed watching their pieces grow "hair". (Bottom left) *MULTI-COLORED CATERPILLAR* by **Tom Lau, Jeff Walker, David Dilman, Donnie Crouch** provided with some assistance by Jeremy White. This piece took a week to create, start to finish. The individuals who collaborated together for this piece have disabilities that range from moderate mental retardation, severe mental retardation and Down syndrome. (Bottom right) **Katie Neal** *RUG PIECE*. Katie loves sewing. For this particular piece Katie picked out all of her materials on her own. She is very proud of all of her art and selects which pieces she wants to sell.

poetry

Jeanne Brice

JEANNE BRICE IS DIRECTOR OF THE CHATTANOOGA OFFICE OF THE MID-SOUTH CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL M.S. SOCIETY. HER PASSION FOR THE M.S. CAUSE STARTED IN THE MID-60'S WHEN HER COLLEGE ROOMMATE WAS DIAGNOSED WITH M.S. SHE WROTE THIS TRIBUTE TO HER FRIEND, WHEN SHE CHAIRED A FUNDRAISER DEDICATED TO HER MEMORY. SHE IS COMMITTED TO MAKING SURE NO ONE HAS TO ENDURE WHAT KATHY DID.

MY FRIEND KATHY

She had long willowy legs
The shiniest chestnut hair and sparkling brown eyes
Full of energy and promise and blessed with a brilliant mind
My friend Kathy

We met the first year in the college of our lives
Before very long, it became apparent
that her intelligence
far exceeded most of ours
A Russian-Math double major with a 4. average
Honors began pouring in our second year
She had just been granted a Russian internship
the next summer to be
Kathy's future seemed wonderfully bright

A frivolous weekend our junior year
attending a mid winter wedding
A momentary loss of balance...
laughter about lack of gracefulness
But the fleeting look of terror that I saw in her eyes
as she fell to the floor
Told me something was terribly wrong
With my friend Kathy

Within weeks
After numbness, headaches, exhaustion
and lack of concentration consumed her
She withdrew from college
ripped from the fertile bed in which she had flourished
And Kathy went home

That summer I was off to New York City
to work with young ghetto children
Traveling around by subway, taxi, ferry and a lot of nerve
The Harlem riots, the World's Fair
Broadway plays at standing room only prices
Instead of going to Russia,
Kathy was at home with her parents, barely getting around

The next year she tried treatments and correspondence courses
with little success in either
That year I was in five weddings
enjoying the wonder of burgeoning womanhood
Kathy attended some of those weddings
but leaning on the arm of another

She visited her sorority several times after she left
And came back for our Senior Banquet as our special guest
We were being launched
Kathy was going backwards

Two years later delighting in big city life,
I, a young school teacher, was living out my dreams
Embracing my independence experiencing new loves and life
She came to visit me in the city anticipating her future
Kathy came to learn braille and mobility

She walked on those slim, unsteady legs using a cane for balance
We attended plays, the symphony,
joked and laughed, recapturing for a time our college days
I read Rod McKuen's poetry as we sat on our beds
And Kathy cried tears of what had been and what would never be

One year later she visited again
just after Neil Armstrong walked on the moon
We went out to eat
She was in a wheelchair newly married and radiant
But she couldn't read the menu and kept dropping her fork
After she left, I wept for my friend Kathy

We corresponded when I went to live and work abroad
I was teaching school, skiing the Alps,
strolling along the River Seine and riding camels in the desert
Kathy was single again and riding in a specially equipped van

I married, moved far away, had babies
drove carpool and volunteered my life away with
Church, school, scouts and significant issues of the 70's and 80's
I lost touch with Kathy, who had none of those opportunities

Many times through the past two decades
I've walked in MS Walkathons,
sent in donations for all the Kathys out there
I lived on the other side of the continent and
often wondered what had happened
to dear, lost Kathy

Recently I chanced upon her address and with heart pounding
I called the nursing home that became her residence
after her parents died
I was told that she had passed away the spring before
Totally paralyzed, sightless, unable to communicate except by tears
My friend Kathy was finally liberated
from the disease that forgets where it came from
But knows where it is going

I wept for
Lost promises of a brilliant career
Missed opportunities to tell her she'd been in my heart all those years
The disease that robbed her life force
But now, moving beyond regret I dedicate my involvement in the
National MS Society to Kathy Debner Thompson's memory
God rest her soul

UNTITLED Christy Wells-Reece

CHRISTY HAS BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH LUPUS, ASTHMA, FIBROMYALGIA AND ARTHRITIS. SHE HAS BEEN USING AN ELECTRIC SCOOTER FOR OVER TWO AND HALF YEARS AND WAS IN MS. WHEELCHAIR TENNESSEE 2003, WINNING THE SPIRIT AWARD AND THE TALENT AWARD FOR SINGING. SHE BELIEVES IN FINDING BEAUTY IN MANY, MANY PLACES IF YOU LOOK CLOSELY ENOUGH.

I used to think summer break was a wonderful thing. When I was a kid, we all lived for that day in late May when we were turned loose to pillage and plunder the neighborhoods of our fair city. We would sleep in late and get suntans while eating junk food and Popsicles to keep cool.

Now that I am a mother myself, I realize that this is all a communist plot. My eyes have been opened! I was sailing in a big ship of fools until now, but no more! The communists are definitely behind the long summer break our children take from school. They are using our children against us in an effort to drive us all mad. Then they can come in and take over America while we are all locked away in little padded rooms with no sharp objects or shoestrings.

I have been observing this phenomenon for the last four years now. The transformation is subtle at first. Then, as the years go by and we slowly lose our sanity, the need for subtlety is no more. When children first start school, they are sweet little creatures. They carry their pencil boxes and notepads into the class with a tiny tear in their eyes as they wave goodbye to their mommies. They look like perfect angels and you would never believe that they could be part of a conspiracy. During that first summer break, things seem to be almost the same as they were the previous year. The child is a little more independent and we do miss being able to go to the grocery store for mayonnaise without someone tagging along. But you tell yourself that this is part of the adjustment and you go on with life.

However, as the years go by and the kids get bigger, they no longer pretend to love you and want to spend time with you. Their true colors come out. You are no longer "Mommy;" you are now "Oh, Mother." You are no longer "Super Mom." You have many job titles now, like cook, driver, maid, laundry woman, and, most of all, referee.

It is the referee part that will drive you insane the fastest. Whether you have more than one child or your little darling plays with others in the neighborhood, it is your job to make sure that everyone gets along. This is a maddening job, one with no benefits or combat pay. You can't opt out of this job either. You are stuck! And then the summer break begins.

During summer break, you wake early. Not because you want to, but because of the kids. The same kids that grumbled and blasted you under their breath for the last nine months when they had to get up early for school are now getting up early because they don't want to miss the new episode of the "Jungle Rats in Space." And when you tell them the new episode is going to be played again at noon, they look at you with those eyes that cut right through you and say, "Oh, Mother. Buy a clue. It won't be new then."

So sleeping is out. On to the next job: let's clean! "Oh, Mother, can you please vacuum some other time? I'm on the phone." Okay, maybe laundry. This requires an extreme amount of bravery. You must be able to face down any wild animal that you come across while gathering laundry. Whether it's a hormonal teenager or whatever is living under their beds, you must prevail! They have tried their best to make it interesting for you. You may come back bloodied but not broken. And, remember, it's the thrill of the chase and the excitement of the kill. No stain shall get past you! Right in the middle of feeling like you have conquered Laundry Mountain, it begins.

"You took my shirt! Who said that you could take my shirt? That's mine! I don't care if I am wearing your pants, you didn't ask if you could take my shirt! No, I will not let go of your hair. You let go of my hair. Stop scratching me! Stop it! No wedgies! No wedgies! Mother!"

This is the time for you to pull out the whistle and black and white striped shirt and call a foul. While trying to get the two loving siblings separated from their firm embrace, both of your precious offspring begin calmly telling you in each ear about how the other was the one in the wrong and they were simply trying to give them

Sad and dismal is the story
We have heard this stranger tell
Of our father's ancient glory
'Ere the fated empire fell
From the depths of degradation
We send you to restore our nation.

Though these lines were delivered during a recent Chattanooga Theatre Centre production of Aristophanes' classic satire "The Birds," the actors speaking them were not what you would expect. These birds were played by three young people ages 10 through 12 who just happened to have Down syndrome.

Chattanooga Theatre Centre and the Chattanooga Down Syndrome Society (formerly UPPs for Downs) have had a multipart collaboration over the course of the last two years. It started with an acting class in 2002 for people with Down syndrome age ten and up, continued when some of these people participated in CTC's regular summer camp, and recently culminated in seven weeks of rehearsals and a two-night production of "The Birds" in CTC's Circle Theatre. Cayla Roark, Sarah Fields, and Chris Petulla (who made up the Greek chorus) joined members of TheatreQuest, CTC's program geared towards teens interested in exploring acting as a career. It was not until the end of the performance, when the chorus removed their masks, that the audience was made aware of the "disability."

a caring, compassionate reminder of how they would like to have their rights respected. Of course, at this point you notice that one has a hand full of the other's hair and they are both now missing a couple of teeth. "Illegal contact, grounded from the phone for two weeks."

You muddle through this fight only to referee 17 more before noon and then it hits you. This is only the beginning of June! What are you going to do until September? Ah ha! You get a big idea. You will take them out into public, thinking that they will be on their best behavior if others are watching.

So everyone gets into the car and off you go to the local swimming pool. You find a spot with not too much direct sunlight, spread out your towels and tell the kids to go away. The radio is tuned to your favorite station, your sunglasses allow you to people-watch without anyone knowing who you are looking at, and a cool breeze blows your way. For a moment, life is good.

What is that? Did you hear one of your kids call for help? Frantically, you start looking for those little angels that you gave life to. Only one is visible, so you ask, "Where is your brother?"

"Oh, Mother, am I my brother's keeper?" Makes you want to rethink all that Sunday school time, huh? Then



The play, which was performed in April, was a well-attended, successful partnership, highlighting both the abilities of the actors and CTC's commitment to making quality theatre experiences available to all the community. And the association continues: Chattanooga Theatre Centre is already making plans for a full-fledged production of "Bambi" in the fall, incorporating actors from CDSS as well as more typical actors who will audition to participate. Auditions were held in August, and the play will be performed over the course of three weekends beginning September 23, as well as during the daytime for school groups. It is guaranteed to be entertaining and refreshing!

you notice bubbles coming from under him. Two things come to mind as to what is causing this. Either way, it ain't good! Then, as if rising from the grave, a hand comes out of the water from behind him and brings down Mr. Witty. It had never occurred to you that he was sitting on his brother's head underwater, but then, why should it?

At this point, your brain is starting to turn to mush and you aren't thinking clearly. You begin to wonder out loud, "If I let them kill each other, will I go to jail? I wouldn't actually do anything myself. They would be doing all the work."

Then you realize it has happened: you are ready for that little padded room and nice bowls of pudding. Let the communists take over. Who cares anymore? While you are contemplating how much simpler life will be without shoestrings, both boys come over to apologize. They kiss you on either cheek and say, "Mommy, we're sorry. We didn't mean to get on your nerves. We love you. "

A warm, fuzzy feeling suddenly comes over you. Has this all been a mistake? Were you ready to join the circus and leave all of this behind just because you were overreacting? Nah...join the circus, at least until September.

A MOTHER'S LOVE Sheri Anderson

SHERI ANDERSON IS A 29-YEAR-OLD MOTHER OF TWO LITTLE GIRLS—HALEY, AGE FOUR, AND BRITTNEY, AGE SEVEN— AND THE DAUGHTER OF KATHY JONES, ABOUT WHOM THIS PIECE WAS WRITTEN. SHERI IS BLIND.

Kathy sat holding her new baby and thanking God for her little miracle. The five years it took her to gain her dream of having a baby seemed unimportant now. The little girl in her arms was perfect. Or so it seemed.

As the days turned into weeks, Kathy's baby began having eye infections that matted the lids together and made the baby extremely cranky. Kathy took her to the doctor and tried everything under the sun, but to no avail. After a few months, Kathy started noticing that her little girl wasn't following toys with her eyes like the other babies in her neighborhood. Other than that, though, everything seemed to be fine. Her eyes didn't run much anymore, and the doctors didn't seem to think there were any problems.

By the time the baby was six months old, she was crawling. She crawled to the edge of a stairwell in a family member's house that was unfamiliar to her, and promptly fell down the entire flight of stairs. Kathy's father told her that it was completely normal for babies to fall, and that everything was okay.

Once Kathy's baby reached nine months, she was walking. The parenting books said this was perfect timing. There seemed to be a slight problem, though. When at home, Sheri did fine. She toddled around the house without any problems. But Kathy did notice that when someone came over to visit, Sheri would tilt her head and listen to the incoming visitor. She didn't run to greet the person unless that person first spoke and sounded familiar to her.

Kathy thought nothing of it. The doctors were giving Sheri a clean bill of health. During this time, Kathy would visit family and friends, carrying her toddler along. In homes where Sheri wasn't familiar, she continued to get hurt, running into coffee tables more than once and falling over things. Kathy was alarmed, and after Sheri busted her lip twice in one afternoon visiting a friend, she took Sheri to the doctors again.

The doctors told Kathy there was nothing wrong with Sheri's eyes. They were clear and green, and there seemed to be no problem. Kathy didn't back down. She told them that Sheri was proceeding forward just like the parenting books said she should. She wanted to know why her daughter kept running into things.

After about two months, the doctors tired of Kathy's constant visits and placed

Sheri in a straightjacket to do extensive tests on her eyes. Twenty-two-year-old Kathy was horrified at their obvious lack of empathy for her firstborn. Eventually, she was forced to leave the room because of her interference.

Finally, the verdict came in. The doctors thought this would answer all of Kathy's questions, and the ordeal would be over. There was nothing wrong with Sheri's eyes. Without psychological tests or anything to go on other than Sheri's obvious problems running into things, the doctors concluded that she was mentally delayed. Kathy was surprised. She contradicted the doctors' findings. Sheri spoke clearly and in complete sentences by 15 months, knew her alphabet and numbers by the time she was 18 months, and had been on schedule with every milestone listed in her books.

Kathy took her daughter home and decided that she was the mother and knew more than the doctors did. They were wrong and she would prove it. She kept up the nagging visits and constant questions until Sheri was four years old. At that point, a specialist did find a problem with Sheri's vision: it wasn't her eyes; it was her retina.

During her seemingly normal pregnancy with Sheri, Kathy had had what she thought was a three-day cold. She experienced a low-grade fever and fatigue, but little else came of it. The new specialist told Kathy that she had been around someone with Rubella. She didn't contract it herself, but she had mild symptoms in those three days, and even though they caused little problem to Kathy's body, the growing baby inside was affected.

Kathy was relieved that the problem had been diagnosed. Now all she had to do was raise her daughter in the best way she knew how. From the beginning, with Sheri falling down stairs and busting her lip on coffee tables, Kathy was forced to decide what she would and wouldn't allow her daughter to accomplish without assistance. Now she decided that her daughter would be given the freedom that other children had, and she prayed that God would protect Sheri when she herself could not.

Kathy decided to never stop her daughter from doing anything that her heart was set on doing. She first tried public schools. She didn't want Sheri to be treated any differently than other children. But after a year and a half, Sheri was miserable. The teachers wouldn't allow Sheri to participate in a lot of the classroom activities for fear she would get hurt, so she often returned home from school angry and depressed.

Kathy finally had enough. She swallowed back her own fears of a state residential school for the blind and enrolled Sheri in the first grade at one such local school. From then on, Sheri thrived in a school environment. The headaches that had plagued the seven-year-old were gone. She didn't try to see things that were impossible for her to see. She learned to read

Braille within a few months. Kathy saw less and less of her daughter as the weeks passed, but Sheri was doing what made her happy, and that was what Kathy wanted most of all.

Sheri continued to grow and to try everything she could to terrify her mother. She learned to ride a bike at age seven. Then she moved on to bigger and more frightening things. She decided she wanted to be on the school's swim team. Kathy bit back her fear and went to the first swim meet. Seeing her 50-pound seven-year-old swimming in 10 feet of water almost did her in. Gripping the railing and trying not to jump in, she bit back her fear and let her daughter swim. She never let Sheri know just how many times she had to stop herself from jumping over the rail and into the water.

As Sheri grew, she was never treated any differently than Kathy's other two daughters. All three girls played outside, rode bikes, stopped the ice-cream truck, and all the other normal things that small girls do, and never once did her mother step in and separate her from the group. Kathy never let Sheri hear her on the porch or let on that she was going from window to window inside the house to ensure the safety of her daughter. She wanted Sheri to have fun and feel free, but she could peep without interfering with the children's play.

In high school, Sheri decided she wanted to go to a public school. Of course, she picked the biggest one in town, and Kathy was again faced with decisions. She wanted Sheri to finish her high school education at the school for the blind, but she gave in to what Sheri wanted.

Eventually, the drastic changes Sheri met at the new school proved too oppressing. She missed the track team, cheerleading squad, and all the other things she participated in at the school for the blind. With her mother's suppressed relief, Sheri returned to graduate from the school for the blind. During the track events, Kathy always stood by Sheri's side. The school usually participated against other schools for the blind in other states. Kathy would drive to Indiana or wherever, just to give her undying support.

When it came time for college, Sheri picked one 40 miles from home and had her mother take her the day before classes, which happened to be Sheri's birthday. Kathy left her in the dorm room and had to just walk out the door. She had to drive away and hope her little girl would be okay in a big university setting. She did look back, her eyes streaming with previously unshed tears, but she never let Sheri know it.

Kathy gave her all to her daughter by letting her fly free of the restraints of a disability. She never allowed her fear of the unknown to hinder her child's perception of the world or herself. By way of letting go and stepping back, Kathy gave Sheri everything she needed. That is the most extensive definition of love I know, and the best thing a mother can give her child.



Christopher John Friberg

CHRISTOPHER JOHN FRIBERG AND HIS TWIN BROTHER WERE DIAGNOSED WITH A MENTAL ILLNESS AS TEENAGERS. CHRISTOPHER ENJOYS CLEANING, WORKING, PLAYING SPOONS, STUDYING MUSIC AND SCIENCE, WATCHING CARTOONS, EXERCISING, WRITING POETRY, AND ESPECIALLY PLAYING GAMES OF STRATEGY AND CHANCE.

Julie Sullivan

JULIE HAS AN 11-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER WITH DOWN SYNDROME. SHE WROTE THIS POEM FROM HER DAUGHTER'S PERSPECTIVE.

BABY, I FEEL SO HAPPY KNOWING YOU ARE ALIVE

I am so happy I am not sure why Like a prize in a Cracker Jack box Such an unexpected surprise

And I feel so pumped up with joy As I wonder shall we be together soon again For with the dice of fate, I dare do not toy Yet I keep hoping somehow we can be close friends

So moved by your radiant spirit So happy you are alive If you are touched, yes I'm glad to hear it May we spread angels' wings and thrive

No I don't know how to tell you How sorry I am for acting like such a fool But now I know that you lay close crafty kangaroo So know, your prosperity I wish to feel

No I don't know how to dispel the truth But I know that these good memories don't change And this beautiful sensation stands as utter proof Yes this life evolves delightfully strange

There is always a vision in the darkness Even the blind are never totally blind And even when the world is at its darkest black It is so beautiful and kind

And I am so happy And I think that I know why It's just the knowledge you are somewhere near Exploring the corridors of your life Yes it's just the knowledge that you are out there somewhere Experiencing life

MEANT TO SHINE

My speech is slow this I know.

My steps are not always easy. but I am always on the go.

My eyes sparkle with such life, even though many days are met with strife.

The stares from others that I receive, proves just how special God must have made me.

I know my mother often wonders why this happened to me, but the love we share is clear to see.

My place in life I have yet to find, but I am sure I am a star meant to shine!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUBMISSION

Due to space limitation, we regret that we are not able to include every submission in the Breaking Ground Arts Issue. If your submission is not included, we encourage you to submit again next year. We will keep your submission on file and it is possible that it may be printed in subsequent issues of Breaking Ground, including next year's Arts Issue.



Leah Williams Gardner

LEAH WILLIAMS GARDNER HAS WORKED FOR UNITED CEREBRAL PALSY OF THE MID-SOUTH, INC. FOR TEN YEARS IN VARIOUS CAPACITIES, CURRENTLY, SHE IS A PROGRAM COORDINATOR FOR PROGRAM MEMPHIS. THIS WAS WRITTEN ABOUT HER COUSIN WHO WAS THE ORIGINAL REASON SHE BEGAN WORKING WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.©1983

David Pointer

DAVID POINTER HAS A SMALL PRESS BOOK OF POEMS FORTHCOMING FROM INDIAN HERITAGE PUBLISHING IN MORRISTOWN. RECENTLY, HE RELEASED AN EP CD OF EXPERIMENTAL MUSIC AND POETRY FOR SMALL PRESS CIRCULATION. EACH SONG HAS A DISABLED PERSON INCLUDED IN EACH LYRIC.

BRAVE AND BOLD

The smiles on their faces told The story of their happiness Their first child born with no apparent illness How could they know then that they would soon have to be so brave and so bold?

Their young babe grew and grew As his horrible disease progressed His family couldn't show him how much they were oppressed The time to be brave and bold was now Yes, they knew

"A public school he can attend," said the doctor For a while longer he could walk He always could sanely think and talk His parents always there seeming braver, bolder

"Ma, I need a straw for my milk!" shouts Chas Every trip to the bathroom and meal a chore The never ending feeling of guilt for being a pain or a bore He seems just as brave and as bold, like he always has

"In a wheelchair he must be pushed, To a special school he must go," Announced the doctor in a voice just so To his parents, "Please be brave and bold if you want to talk you won't be hushed"

When he was old enough to understand; really know He could see how his parents tried, How often they also had cried Soon each openly discussed their fear and woe

A life of only hope and prayers for this young knave A prayer in the morning for just one more day It's hard to pray a thank you for a life that way Ever trying to appear bold and brave

The inevitable end no one knew where or when, Never a hint or clue A sister and brother the last in view Never to hide behind brave and bold again

His life had to end but why so young, not old? On September 29, 1981 at the age of twenty-two Others with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy can live but only through help from you Help others to keep from hiding behind their brave and bold.

VISITATION

Most years America drove by Camelot federal housing authority, but in 1973, when fireflies still held air superiority over all that mattered to me some guy in a primered Apache pickup thought to drop some portable blue boy scouts into the scene—who assisted an Elephant lady with her grocery bags, little girls, and boy. And in the six or so microminutes they were there they almost refurbished hope's dilapidated double stroller before climbing truckward never to be the scene again.

CHECK US OUT ON THE WEB

breaking ground is now on the web at: www.breakingground.org

PERFORMING ARTS PROGRAMS

IN TENNESSEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

EAST TN



A Very Special Arts Festival, Knoxville
865-637-4561

The Dogwood Arts Festival is sponsoring the 15th Annual "A Very Special Arts Festival" for elementary and middle school students who have disabilities. The VSAF gives exceptional students the opportunity to participate in art workshops, dance, and sing karaoke. It encourages leaders to involve exceptional youth in a variety of creative arts. For more information, visit www.dogwoodarts.com.

Circle Modern Dance Company, Knoxville
865-524-7615

Circle Modern Dance Company is a not-for-profit organization operating under the philosophy that everyone is a dancer and everyone has the right to dance. The founders of Circle envisioned an atmosphere in which area choreographers and performance artists could display their artistic endeavors and recent works without being bound by the strictures of a "dance company." Now in its 12th year, Circle Modern Dance continues to attract wide-ranging audiences with daring choreography and a versatile cadre of dancers. Their dance troupe includes dancers that use wheelchairs. Contact Kim at 865-522-7505 or check out their website at www.kornet.org/circle.

Creative Discovery Museum, Chattanooga
423-756-2738

This museum sponsors a program called Club Discovery that meets from the last week of October until the end of April, every Tuesday from 5:00 to 7:00 pm. This peer program for children ages 8 to 12 is an art-based curriculum that supplements what they learn in school. Children with all types of disabilities, including Down syndrome, visual impairment, hard of hearing, deaf, autism, and many others participate in this fun art program, which feeds into the teen volunteer program and encourages them to stay involved with the museum once they are too old to participate in Club Discovery. For more information, go to www.cdmfun.org/MiddleTennessee.

MIDDLE TN

Anne Ambrose, Nashville
615-352-3646

Anne Ambrose and David Dobson do presentations and performances on the subject of mental health and recovery. Their work features music and interaction and uses humor to illustrate and illuminate life challenges that can sometimes seem overwhelming. It's a positive show for both youth and adults. Call Anne at 615-352-3646 or David at 615-298-267.



Special B-Team ARC Angels, Fayetteville
931-433-7333

The Special B-Team ARC Angels are a group of non-denominational women with developmental disabilities who have banded together to spread happiness through singing and skits. The Lincoln County ARC of Fayetteville furnishes both hands-on and financial support to the ladies as they practice and perform at area churches, nursing homes, and special community events. The group was formed in 1999 with six members and has grown to comprise 15 members. For information or bookings, contact Patsy Gilliam.

Vanderbilt Kennedy Center, Nashville
615-322-8240

The Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Research on Human Development has a year-round series of art exhibits dedicated to or created by people who have disabilities or who are at risk developmentally. These exhibits rotate quarterly. To reach out into the community, the Center invites organizations and businesses to display an exhibit. They also invite suggestions for future exhibits. Contact Teresa at teresa.turnbo@vanderbilt.edu, 615-936-5118.

Metropolitan Nashville Arts Commission, Nashville
615-862-6720

This Commission manages the local government's grants program and public art program. A goal is to provide leadership that stimulates and advances art in the community. Find out more by visiting www.artsnashville.org.

Metro Parks and Recreation, Nashville
615-883-2210

Metro Parks and Recreation organizes a magic program in which all the magicians have a cognitive disability. Twelve individuals ages 16 to 43 perform as the Court Jesters Magic Troupe, which was designed to allow people with disabilities to experience the wonderful world of magic. The program is free, and all magic tricks can be constructed from common household items. A free instructional videotape and resource manual are available. Contact Tom Stone.

Parthenon Tours, Nashville
615-862-8431 ext. 235

The Parthenon, in the center of Centennial Park, has a special tour for people who are visually impaired or blind, or hard of hearing or deaf. Tours for the sight-impaired describe the art and architecture of the building through interesting touch exercises. Call Deegee Lester to set up tours for special audiences. For more information, go to www.parthenon.org or email info@parthenon.org.

Renaissance Center, Dickson
615-740-5600, 888-700-2300

The Renaissance Center is a state-of-the-art facility utilizing the latest technology to promote a variety of educational programs and initiatives. The center has worked with Developmental Services in Dickson to create private art classes for residents with cognitive disabilities. Many of the classes offered include persons with disabilities. More information is available at www.rcenter.org.

Tennessee Arts Commission, Nashville/Statewide
615-532-9797

This state agency funds and supports quality arts experiences to ensure that Tennesseans have access to and participate in the arts. The contact person is Lisa Hester. Go to www.arts.state.tn.us.

Williamson County Recreation Center, Franklin
615-790-5719

The Williamson County Recreation Center offers classes to individuals (usually adults) with cognitive disabilities, including line dancing and arts & crafts classes. Individuals from other counties are welcome. The contact person is Vicki Pitner.

Pacesetters Inc., Algood
(931) 537-9100

Pacesetters is a Tennessee nonprofit agency with six centers providing services to persons with

disabilities. Pacesetters' art program began in 1996 and includes artists-in-residence with support from the Tennessee Arts Commission and Cookeville Arts Council. Their artwork can be seen in exhibits around the state.

Tennessee Art Therapy Association, Springfield/Statewide
731-642-4199

Connie Livingston Dunn is President and is the statewide contact for art therapists in Tennessee. She is currently working on the project "Art with Children Under Three Years to Facilitate Communication" with Tennessee Infant Parent Services (TIPS) Program. Connie has years of experience working with children and adults who have disabilities. www.rainbowartscenter.com.

VSA Arts Tennessee Project, Nashville/Statewide
615-826-5252

The goal of this statewide organization is to create and support avenues of creative expression for people with disabilities. There are several programs, including Artist Residency Program, Awards of Excellence, Legislative Plaza Art Show, Night at the Bluebird Cafe, Start with the Arts, Ticketbank, and Young Soloist. For further information, go to www.vsarts.org.

The Night Fever Dancers, Memphis
901-756-8026

This is a local dance troupe made up of students with disabilities in the Memphis area that give local and regional dance performances on request. This is a program of the Down Syndrome Association of the Mid-South. The contact person is Brenda Farley. For info: www.dsamemphis.org.

STAR Center, Jackson
800-464-5619

The downtown location holds a ceramics program, painting classes, and music therapy. To sign up, call Beth at 731-668-3888. Other services available include art and music therapy. Art therapy benefits the individual through the experience of using art media, images, and the creative process. Art Therapists serve children and adults individually at The STAR Center and in group sessions in Jackson Madison County Schools. Music Therapy uses music and music-related strategies to assist or motivate a person towards specific nonmusical goals. This program serves both children and adults with varied disabilities including stroke, physical disabilities, autism, head injury, developmental disabilities, and others. www.starcenter.tn.org

WEST TN

poetry

Wes Goodson

Ruthie-Marie Beckwith, Ph.D.

Ashleigh Huber

WES GOODSON IS A 17-YEAR-OLD STUDENT AT MADISON SCHOOL WHO HAS DYSLEXIA AND OTHER LEARNING DISABILITIES. HE RECORDS HIS POEMS AND STORIES ON A DIGITAL RECORDER AND HAS THEM TRANSCRIBED. WES LOVES LISTENING TO THE CLASSICS, POKEMON, AND HARRY POTTER. HIS FAVORITE AUTHOR IS EDGAR ALLEN POE.

RUTHIE-MARIE BECKWITH IS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE TENNESSEE MICROBOARDS ASSOCIATION, INC. SHE HAS BEEN A WRITER SINCE CHILDHOOD.

ASHLEIGH HUBER IS A 17-YEAR-OLD FROM KINGSPORT. HER YOUNGER SISTER WAS BORN WITH DOWN SYNDROME. ONE DAY AT SCHOOL, SHE SAW A BOY IN A WHEELCHAIR WITH CEREBRAL PALSY. WONDERING HOW HE FELT AND WHAT HE WAS GOING THROUGH, SHE WROTE THIS POEM.

THE CANDLE

A SUMMONING

I WISH

Love is as a living candle
That lights one's very soul.
The candle can never be blown out
But as hatred takes its toll,
The candle runs the risk of falling
Into the darker side of the soul.

There are those who are not called
to witness or to testify—
only to stand as a beacon
in an early autumn fog;

I sit here alone in my gilded cage
Screaming inside but my voice I cannot raise
My emotions are hidden behind a frozen face
The stares and the whispers, the pain cannot be erased
All I want to do is run away with all my might
Though my body is frozen, my soul wants to take flight
To run, to swing, to play catch with my dad
To swim or play ball, these are dreams that I've had
I'll never be able to give my mom a big hug
All I have to offer is just never enough
What I feel inside they simply will not ever know
What I feel inside cannot ever be shown
I have no choice but to stay in this chair
To sit still and silent since life is so unfair
But for now I am still hidden behind this unwanted disguise
Taking the glances from bypassing eyes
I simply wish that they knew how this feels
The shame and the tears and the pain that is so unreal
I wish they knew

The hateful half of the human soul,
Is like a horrid, pitch black hole.
Where demons dwell
And wait to take control
Of the lovely light within your soul.

to send forth a gentle aspect
to those who must bear
the darkness of others,
to those who must carry

But there is luck without luck
In the candle of your soul.
For it will never be extinguished
But it may turn cold.

the anger of this age,
to those who must wait
with hands cupped to capture
the tears no longer wept,

For if it falls among the halls
Of the demon's from within,
They will keep it for themselves
And let the heat grow dim.

to those who must turn back
in the night, to those who must wonder
is it fear that causes them to stand
so silent, to stand so still.

For within the hole inside your soul
It is chilling, icy cold.
And this dark ice
Will never be nice
To a light so bright and wann.
For the ice does not wish to melt
And the darkness will hold its own.

For the lovely light of beauty true
Shall suffer in ways its owner never knew.
For the once white, hot light of love
Is now a bonfire in a tub,
Flaring dark and evil flames
And hating the world above.

For the lovely light of love
With beauty bright and warm,
Will not keep its brilliant light
In a realm so miserable and glum.

So keep hate far from your soul
And your candle will not fall to the demons goal.

It will not go out
Of this I am sure.
But the brilliant light will suffer
Much worse askewer.

So love your life
And live it with love,
And keep your candle
Warm and snug.



(Top) **Ashleigh Huber's** portrait of her sister *ERIKA HUBER*. (Center) **Barbara Hunley's** *SELF PORTRAIT*. Barbara's artistic interest and talent has resulted in over a dozen beautiful works which decorate the walls of the Michael Dunn Center, where she has received support for more than 30 years. In spite of her multiple disabilities Barbara spends some time every day working on her art, which is typically filled with bright colored pictures of flowers, lakes, light houses, or covered bridges. (Bottom) **Tim Turner**, who has developmental disabilities, resides in Nashville with his grandmother. He is 24 years old and works part-time for Universal Cleaning Service. A responsible, caring, single parent, he is an inspiration to young fathers everywhere.

INTERVIEW WITH OUTSIDER ART EXPERT, ROGER RICCO By Jon Kent

It would be difficult to find an art expert in America better qualified to comment on artists with disabilities than Roger Ricco. Mr. Ricco was one of the first champions of artists out of the mainstream art world, so-called "outsider artists," which include people with developmental disabilities. He and his business partner Roger Maresca are co-authors of several well-known books in the field, including *American Self-Taught*, and co-owners of the prominent New York City gallery Ricco/Maresca. One of Ricco/Maresca's gallery artists is Nashville native Laura Craig McNellis, a well-known and respected painter with mental retardation. *Breaking Ground* interviewed Roger Ricco to learn more about the national art scene for artists with disabilities.

BG: What does the term "outsider art" mean?

Mr. Ricco: Outsider art in America now, generically, refers to art that is done outside of the art community. It is also outside of the historical context of art: the artists are untrained, often uneducated, perhaps living in a very rural area of the country. In America, we need a quick term for everything. Outsider art also includes artists who are in prisons or hospitals, and people with disabilities.

BG: Historically, when did artists with disabilities begin to be recognized?

Mr. Ricco: In the mid 1940's the artist Jean Dubuffet became enamored with some of the art coming out of hospitals in Austria, Germany, and France. So he became a champion of art coming out of institutions created by people with severe disabilities. In America, the real notice was around 1981, when the Corcoran Gallery at the Smithsonian did a show called Black Folk Art in America. These weren't artists with disabilities, but rather artists outside the mainstream. Soon the art world began to notice artists from every corner of the castle, so to speak.

BG: How did the art world respond to these unique perspectives?

Mr. Ricco: Many prominent artists at that time responded with total amazement. Because outsider artists are very rarely influenced by the art tradition, many people feel there is a rare purity to their work.

BG: When referring to artists with disabilities, is the term "outsider artist" still in vogue, or is there a new term around the corner?

Mr. Ricco: There isn't really a new term around the corner, but perhaps there will be soon. Artists with disabilities are getting more and more attention. There are new foundations and institutes for artists with disabilities forming all the time. Many of them are modeled after the Creative Growth Center in California and the Riddle Institute in North Carolina. Some are residential communities and others are day only, but they both offer wonderful opportunities for people with disabilities—especially young people.

BG: What are some of the most interesting aspects of these centers and institutes?

Mr. Ricco: Well, art aside for the moment, there are several fascinating dynamics occurring at these institutes. When people with disabilities come together to create art, they become much more communicable and social. Even if their own work is solitary in nature, being in close proximity to other artists is an engaging process. A second important development is what Dr. Riddle of the Riddle Institute refers to as the "Joy Factor." Individuals with disabilities find an important purpose in creating art. I've seen enough to know that there is a certain light in their eyes when they are doing their art that simply isn't there when they are rocking in a chair or just sitting with a group.

BG: A sort of metamorphosis occurs?

Mr. Ricco: Absolutely. The story of Judith Scott, a famous artist with Down syndrome, is one of the most dramatic examples of this metamorphosis. Judith and her twin sister were born in Cincinnati about 40 years ago. The first seven years of their lives, they lived with a family. When Judith was around age seven, a physician recommended that she be placed in a mental institution. Judith remained at the mental institution for nearly 35 years—and was considered to be quite a troublemaker. Judith's sister, who was living in California, decided to take her out of the institution to live with her. She took Judith to the Creative Growth Center and for a month Judith just sat doing nothing. One day, she picked up some material and starting winding it together. All of a sudden, she began to create these beautiful, intricately wound objects. She started working at her craft from 10:00 to 5:00 every day, and now she is semi world famous and has a great purpose to her life.

BG: I've heard people comment on how Laura Craig McNellis changes when she picks up her paintbrush.

Mr. Ricco: Yes, I created a documentary film about her and you can see it when it happens. When she picks up a paintbrush, she is like a samurai warrior picking up a sword. Her hands become exquisitely facile and graceful, and if you only watch her hand you would never guess that she has any disability whatsoever.

BG: Stories like these can change society's perceptions as well.

Mr. Ricco: Most definitely. Out of the 130 artists or so working at the Creative Growth Center, maybe two or three create work that our gallery features, but every person there is experiencing the "joy factor" of being an artist. It definitely challenges common beliefs about what people with disabilities can and cannot do.



ONE OF RICCO/MARESCA'S GALLERY ARTISTS IS NASHVILLE NATIVE LAURA CRAIG MCNELLIS, who has mental retardation. McNellis' art is widely acclaimed. There is a book and documentary film about Laura and her work. (Left) *YELLOW BIRTHDAY CAKE* (Right) *POPSICLE MAN*

BG: Let's talk about the art itself for a moment. What are you looking for when you select an outsider artist for your gallery?

Mr. Ricco: I use the same criteria whether the artist has a disability or not. It is, of course, very subjective. Does the art move me? Does it surprise me? Is it consistent—do several pieces surprise me as opposed to one or two? By definition, the word surprise means that I'm not really sure what I'm looking for until I see it. It is sort of like falling in love.

BG: How should the parents, siblings, or friends of people with disabilities help them develop as artists?

Mr. Ricco: Be a good friend or family member to them. Get them whatever medium they want—whether it is a

paintbrush or piano. It is critical not to impose anything on them, including your own ideas of what constitutes good art, or a better way to do it. It will destroy them if you do. Let them do their thing. Some families also choose to move to areas of the country where there are places like the Creative Growth Center that offer a community of artists and a supportive environment.

BG: Any tips about how to help market outsider art?

Mr. Ricco: Try to get into shows in the local community—places like the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center in Nashville—where they champion this type of art. Often times, the art will get noticed. It's tough, but it's tough for all artists.

BG: Finally, can you tell us about upcoming shows at your gallery?

Mr. Ricco: I'm very excited about a show in January featuring artists with autism. We will be showing work from artists who represent the entire spectrum of the disorder. We will have special guests and lectures. It should be on our website soon. If people want to know more about us or the show, they can visit us on the web at riccomaresca.com.

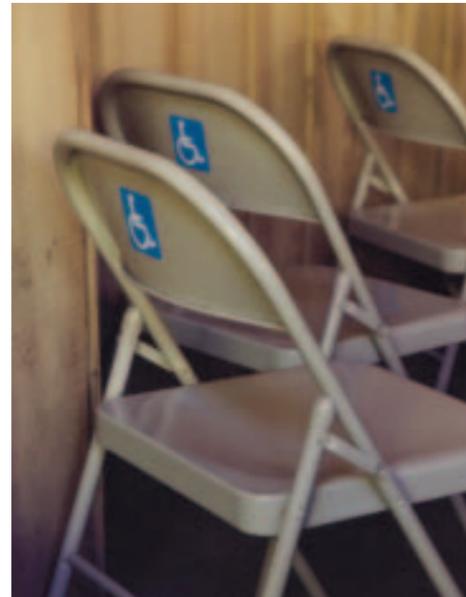
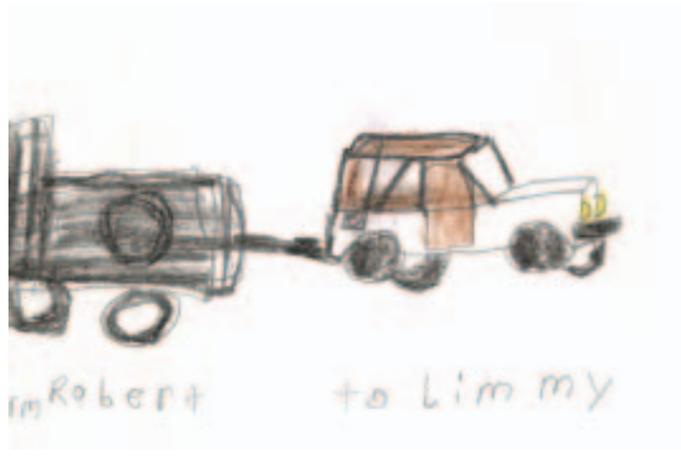
BG: On behalf of our readers, thank you very much for your time and valuable insights.

Mr. Ricco: My pleasure.

—Jon Kent is the editor of *Breaking Ground* and principal of Kent Communications Group in Nashville.

<p>ABOUT THE COUNCIL: The Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities provides leadership to ensure independence, productivity, integration, and inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the community through promotion of systems change.</p>	
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(Top left) **Robert Miller** of Greene County Skills *TALL GRASS*. Robert has exhibited his artwork in various local and state exhibitions, competitions, and galleries. (Top right) **Casey Cope** of Greene County Skills, loves Special Olympics, golf, swimming, the arts, and people. (Second row, left) **Lois Richards** of Greeneville has attended art classes for 10 years at the Roby Adult Center. She lives alone at a retirement center and attends classes at Tusculum. (Second row, right) **Darrell L. Gibson** of Greeneville is 33 years old and enjoys working at Greene County Skills because he gets to do many different things. He enjoys art classes and drawing. (Bottom left) **Taylor Reece** is 10 years old and has ADHD, a visual-motor integration deficit, and Lupus. He reads on a 12th grade level and is on the A/B honor roll. This photo is from a series entitled "Opening Doors in my Hometown." (Bottom center) **Phyllis Fincher** of Greene County Skills, *JIM*. Phyllis likes dogs, working outside, and riding her bike. (Bottom right) **Agnes Thomas**, *ROSA*. Agnes is a mental health consumer living in Nashville.

(Top left) photograph submitted by **Michael Cary Murphy**, Attorney at Law in Morristown. (Top right) Photograph taken in rural Nuevo Leon, Mexico, submitted by **Robert S. Sanders, Jr.**, who has Asperger's syndrome. He has a degree in Electrical Engineering, works for himself, writes novels, and is a photographer. (Center left) *OVER THE RAINBOW MANDLEBROT* submitted by **Connie Livingston-Dunn**, an artist with nerve and muscle damage to her right arm and shoulder and a lifting restriction. She is an Art Therapist and currently teaches art as an adjunct professor at Austin Peay University. (Center) **Luke Randall** of Smyrna, likes to make arts and crafts and is pictured with one of his creations. He is 24 years old, and has Cerebral Palsy. His hobbies include traveling, riding his three-wheel bike, and watching movies. (Bottom left) **Grace Goad** is 10 years old. She is challenged communicatively, socially, cognitively, and otherwise with the diagnosis of autism. As an artist, her key strengths are composition and color. (Bottom right) **Erin Worsham** is a Nashville artist and writer and is internationally renowned for her computer "paintings." Diagnosed with ALS in 1994, Ms. Worsham uses a sensor taped between her eyebrows to create her art.